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The Right to Freedom

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The Way to Freedom

Republic of Belarus today is the only country left out of the former allied republics of the USSR, which is forced to fight for its independence and sovereignty. Belarusan people again and again have to demonstrate to the outer world, to the nearest neighbouring country, to their authorities and at last to themselves that they want «to be called» people, to join free and democratic family of the European peoples.

It was no accident that next in turn action of Belarusan opposition was called Freedom March. First it was expected to support negotiations between Belarusan authorities and opposition. But draft Treaty on the Formation of a Union State of Belarus and Russia, which was published in official press, dramatically changed the preparation process and the demonstration itself...

Although head of the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus applied to the City

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Minsk, 17 Oktober 1999.

Chronicle

On 16 October, Belarusan Popular Front «Adradzhennie» negatively assessing a Treaty on Formation of a Union State of Belarus and Russia, which is going to be signed by A.Lukashenka and B.Yeltsin in November, addressed to Belarusan citizens. It says that this Treaty endangers Belarusan citizens. Therefore BPF «Adradzhennie» calls «to stave off a realisation of Russian imperial plans aimed to abolish both independence and statehood of Belarus.»

On 17 October, there was held a Freedom March in Minsk. It resulted in mass arrests and clashes between participants of the Freedom March and special militia troops. According to the first and therefore not precise communications, which one could hear or see, watching different TV channels, as a result of clashes more than 50 militiamen and soldiers of internal troops were injured and more than 250 participants of the Freedom March were arrested including 100 severely beaten.

On 17 October, there were held actions in support of Freedom March in the administrative centres of Belarus. Uladar Tsurpanaw, chairman of the board of the Human Rights Centre in Magilew, was detained after authorised by the local authorities meeting. He was arrested for carrying a placard saying «No! To political repressions!» There was a resolution adopted during a meeting held in Vitsebsk. It requires immediate declaration of presidential elections in the country and putting a stop to activities aimed to unify Belarus and Russia.

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THE WAY TO FREEDOM

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Executive Committee with request to authorise a meeting to be held on the Square of Independence it didn't permit to conduct Freedom March from Yakub Kolas Square to the Square of Independence.

March participants gathered on Yakub Kolas Square. At 13.00 a column which had about 5-7 thousand march participants made for direction of Bangalor Square. It was quite surprising that one could hardly see a militiaman nearby. The column was joined by passers-by. As a result of it, a short meeting on Bangalor Square had already over 20.000 participants. Speeches of organisers were concise. When Vincuk Viachorka, chairman of the Belarusan Popular Front and one of the organisers of Freedom March, asked people what one should do with this draft Treaty the answer was immediate, «Burn!»

From Bangalor Square the column made for the Square of Independence to bring there both the national white-red-white flag and that of the European Union. The number of March participants was constantly growing up owing to Minsk residents unsatisfied with the policy run by the Belarusan government and inspired by the number of March participants who were not afraid to show their protest. So, the column over 20.000 people was approaching Frantsishak Skaryna Avenue.

It should be mentioned that March participants behaved themselves in a proper way. When the column stopped before the crossing of M.Bagdanovich St. and Varvashenya St. somebody even joked that it stopped waiting for green light. But in actual fact the column was turned by militia barrier toward Skaryna Avenue. The second barrier waited for March participants on Skaryna Avenue itself. This time demonstrators were not allowed to go in direction of the Victory Square but along Kazlova St. and then Pershamayskaya St. where on the bridge across the Svislach river special militia troops and soldiers of Internal ones were waiting for matchers.

It should be said that according to comments of Belarusan TV A.Lukashenka supervised the situation development from the very beginning and at 3 o'clock p.m. he ordered to stop the column. So, it was he who was in favour of making short work of the marchers.

There were about 5.000 militiamen concentrated along Yanka Kupala St., near the National circus and in the yards of the near houses as well. Meanwhile March participants came up to the barrier made up of special militia detachment and soldiers of Internal troops on the bridge over the Svislach river...

World biggest TV channels and broadcasting companies transmitted what happened next. That's why we are not going to describe in detail the events that took place on 17 October in Minsk. We are going merely to make more precise some principle moments.

The first one is who provoked clashes the militia or demonstrators? A.Lukashenka and his assistants assert that it was done by «sheetheads» from the column. But how it was in reality? The column came up to the barrier made up of militiamen and stopped. What one could do? People were standing and shouting at militiamen asking them «Who do you serve for?» «You ought to be ashamed of yourselves!...» There were no way to go further anymore. So, M.Statkevich suggested, «Let's turn around and go back to Yakub Kolas Square». Demonstrators turned back and made some steps away from militia barrier. Then militia shields made way and soldiers of special militia detachment sprang out and began beating, catching and pulling demonstrators into militia cars. It is natural that people began defending themselves first with the help of Flagstaff and then stones. So, severe clashes lasted for 40 minutes. As a result, injured people emerged from both parts...

The second one whether the demonstrators prepared for clashes before Freedom March began? A.Lukashenka asserts that they without a shadow of a doubt did it: they transported pavement slabs there to be thrown later at militiamen... It makes one laugh. But a fact that pavement slabs were unloaded near the scene where clashes took place makes us ponder about it. There are only two explanations of it: either it was an oversight of Minsk city authorities or a planned provocation because people trying to protect themselves were seizing up whatever comes to hand.

The third one the authorities assert that militiamen were not beating but protecting themselves. It's falsehood. Action participants beat off three attacks of militiamen. But what could do ordinary people against armed militiamen with militia batons, shields and in armoured waistcoats and helmets? So, people began breaking up. And at that moment real execution began which continued later in militia buses and in charge offices in the evening, at night and in the next morning... There is hundreds people who suffered. Among them there are a lot of minors and accidental passers-by...

So, what are the outcomes of 17 October events? They are sad ones. That very day one Belarusans beat another ones. Who does need it? The answer is who wants to retain one's power... But Belarusan people once more proved that they are against every kind of unification devised by politicians. We want to live in our own independent and democratic state...

Andrei NALIVA



Christopher Panico's testimony, representative of the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus,

«Head of the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring group in Belarus applied in written form to Minsk City Executive Committee with request to authorise conducting this action on the Square of Independence. We did consider and still consider March organisers to be very intelligent people to come to understanding with.

I observed the events during this rally and saw how Statkevich, Shchukin and other organisers of Freedom March defended militiamen in the middle of clashes helped them to go out of the crowd.

I am confident it was Minsk City Executive Committee's refusal that led to sad events on October 17 in Minsk.»

Criminal pursuit of the Freedom March organisers and participants

The Minsk prosecutor's office instituted criminal proceedings as a result of clashes between police and participants of the protest rally Freedom March on October 17 and a special investigation panel is formed 6 people are detained in line with the criminal case. All of them are accused under Art. 186.3 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus. «Staging or active participation in group activities which break public order.» Mikalai Statkevich, Valery Shchukin, Andrey Valabuew, Gleb Dogil, German Sushkevich and Anton Lazaraw are detained under this accusation. Under the law, everyone is likely to get a 3-year imprisonment or labour works for 2 years or a fine.



Mikola Statkevich

Mikola Statkevich is the leader of the Belarusan Social Democratic Party «Narodnaya Gramada». After the 27th of July (Independence Day) he was detained and accused of staging a non-authorised march. On July 28 the trial brought a verdict: 10 days in administrative arrest. While leader of the Social Democrats was serving his administrative time, criminal proceedings were instituted against him on one and the same violation. M.Statkevich was accused under Art. 186.3 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus – «staging or active participation in group activities, which break social order» and he was punished in the following way: a written undertaking not to leave the country. After the rally M.Statkevich was detained in the headquarters of the Social Democratic Party. Now M.Statkevich is in the custody centre in Valadarsky Street. The punishment was changed – instead of the undertaking not to leave the country he was arrested. On October 18 M.Statkevich went on a hunger strike against the authorities and the militia's actions.

Statkevich case is still being investigated under the previous charge and what's more the Freedom March materials have been added to.

Valery Shchukin

Valery Shchukin deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the 13th Convocation, human rights defender, journalist – «Narodnaya Volya» correspondent.

V.Shchukin is one of the applicants of the Freedom March and meeting. But when the city authorities banned the march, he denied his application and went to the rally as a simple participant. V. Shchukin was summoned to the Savietsky Department of Internal Affairs, where he was detained under Art. 119 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus. V.Shchukin was heavily beaten up (he lodged a complaint to the prosecutor's office of the Savetsky District)

V.Shchukin had been kept in the detention centre for 3 days. After being brought an accusation (on October 22) under Art. 186 of the CC of the Republic of Belarus, he was taken to the custody centre in Valadarsky Street. The punishment was to put him under arrest. In connection with V.Shchukin his deputy immunity has been violated. Under the law, the legitimate Supreme Soviet is to give permission for his arrest, but it didn't.

Anton Lazaraw

Anton is 18, works at the Chervensky market as sales assistant. He was detained on October 21 at his working place for participation in the Freedom March. A militiaman had come up to him at the market and had asked to follow him.

First A.Lazaraw was brought to the Central Department of Internal Affairs, from where his relatives were informed of the detention. Late at night or early in the morning on October 22 A.Lazaraw was taken to the detention centre, next after being brought an accusation of breaking Art. 186.3 of the CC of the Republic of Belarus – to the custody centre in Valadarsky Street where he is being kept now.

Andrey Valabuew

Andrey is 17. He is the eldest son among 4 children in the family. He left evening school and now he is trying to get a place at Horizont plant.

A.Valabuew was detained together with his friends – German Sushkevich and Gleb Dogil after the Freedom March in the underground at Victory Square station. The guys were talking to each other when 5 persons in civil came to them. They tied arms behind the back and dragged to the car.

The detained were brought to the Savetsky Department of Internal Affairs. A.Valabuew was later taken to the detention centre, where he had been for 3 days. He was charged under Art. 186.3 of the CC of the Republic of Belarus and he was punished in the following way: a written undertaking not to leave the country.

Gleb Dogil

Gleb is 20 he is a 4th-year-student at the Historic Department of the Belarus State University. As his mother puts it «he belongs to democratic youth» and «he is a bookworm». G.Dogil has bad eyesight and his relatives are worried about his health.

G.Dogil was detained by people in civil together with German Sushkevich (his cousin) and Andrey Valabuew in the underground at the Victory Square station and brought to the Savetsky Department of Internal Affairs. Next G.Dogil was transferred to the detention centre where he had been kept for 3 days and later was taken to the custody centre in Valadarsky Street. On October 27 G.Dogil was brought an accusation (under Art. 186.3 of the CC of the Republic of Belarus). He was punished in the following way: to be put under arrest.

German Sushkevich

German is 19 he is a 3-year student of the Belarus State University of Information and Radio-electronics (evening department). He is a member of Malady Front. G.Sushkevich was detained on October 17 at about 17.00 in the underground of the Victory Square station after the Freedom March together with his cousin G.Dogilev and a friend of him A.Valabuew. As the persons (5 men) who detained them, were in civil, G.Sushkevich resisted but they have heavily beaten and dragged him to the car. First, G.Sushkevich as well as his friends was taken to the Savetsky Department of Internal Affairs but later he was transferred to the detention centre and then to the custody centre in Valadarsky street. G.Sushkevich was brought an accusation on October 27 (under Art. 186.3 of the CC of the Republic of Belarus) and he was punished in the following way: to be put under arrest.

Tatsyana REVYAKA

The people hurt during the clash with the police during and after the political action Freedom March on October 17 in Minsk appealed to the Human Rights Centre «Viasna». These testimonies are vivid examples how the law enforcement agencies work in Belarus, for whom physical and moral injuries, heavy beatings of the detained are the professional norm.

...They behaved like fascists...

Facts of the Freedom March participants' beating on October 17 in Minsk

Marya Abragimovich (Institute of Linguistics of the Academy of Sciences, assistant, Minsk). «I together with my friend were walking in the Gorky Park. All of a sudden I saw a mess. We decided to sit on the bench and wait. Strangle people in camouflage uniform came up to us, checked our documents and convoyed us in the yards... They brought us to the Leninsky Department of Internal Affairs and started making a report. The accusation was the same for all: breaking social order, bad language. Then they took us to the Partyzansky Department, on our way we had been humiliated. At 6 o'clock special troops arrived to transfer us to the detention centre. In the car there was a mess, there were human bodies on the floor, some people were moaning, we were beaten with truncheons, trampled down. The Special troops making us sing, but I was shocked and failed to recollect a line from any song. But my friend began to sing: «There was a grasshopper in the grass «but they demanded» Sun circle»... They put a truncheon in one man's mouth and at the same time someone was crying: «Further, up to tonsils!» When we were coming out of the car, one militiaman was pushing people out of the car with his legs».





Yury Adamavich Mukhlya testifies (Minsk): «I was punched and butted... I was thrown in the bus where they didn't allow me to get up and by threats made me lie in unnatural position. When all the detained were gathered we left the Savetsky Department of Internal Affairs. After 20 – 30 minutes the bus stopped and special troops started beating the detained. I was asked questions and every time I answered, they punched in kidneys. The militiaman was laughing and said that it was like drinking beer. Walking around the bus, the special troops officials walked on me and made stops purposefully to hurt me.»

Mikalai Mikhaylavich Ganchar testifies (born in 1962, Minsk). «On our way to the bus, we were beaten and pushed. In the bus they knocked people down and made a heap of people. I found myself at the bottom. There were three or for people above. It was hard, but those who were above me suffered more as they were walked on, jumped on and beaten up».

Anatol Alyaksandravich Tsurykaw testifies (70 years old, Minsk): I didn't take part in the clash. When the participants started to run away, I joined them. After several metres, a man in camouflage reached me and heavily beat me with truncheon in the head, then in the leg. My head was heavily bleeding (I don't exaggerate). After that nobody touched me. Some women tried to help me, but they didn't have dressings. Ambulance was called which took me to hospital N 4, where they put stitches, gave me an injection and I had the wound X-rayed. Fortunately, there weren't any cracks in the skull.

Stanislaw Stanislavavich Kavalew testifies (born in 1957, Minsk region): «On October 17 I together with all demonstrators made way of Freedom March. I didn't take part in clashes with police... Part of the demonstrators started to retreat through the park in the direction of the metro. And everyone, who was walking out of the park, was detained. I was seized and dragged to the car. I asked: «Why are you detaining me? Who are you?» I was threatened in response. I was taken to the Savetsky Department of Internal Affairs where they made reports against each of the detained. At 2 or 2.30 at night on October 18 riot police took us from the cell. When I was entering the bus, I was heavily beaten, I fell down and they started kick me. I found myself at the back of the bus. I was thrown on the floor. I heard that others were given the same «treatment» as well. The last people were thrown on those who were on the floor (me as well). We started to suffocate from lack of air. I hear them beating a student. They were cruel that even the riot police officer had to calm them down. After that we were driven somewhere. The officers were walking on our bodies if any started to move. They were beating them again. Later we stopped for about 40 minutes I felt really bad as I have a bad heart. Suddenly I heard one of the detained asking to get up because he felt sick. One of the officers said: «Vomit on the people». I don't remember what was happening later as I had lost consciousness. Hardly had the bus started to move when I recovered. I felt people who were lying on the ground, moving from one side to ano-ther. When we arrived, I was the last to come out. But I couldn't stand firmly on my feet and that's why the officers were holding me and the others were kicking and beating me with truncheons.

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«You got into a police state,» – a militiaman said to a Russian citizen.

After the Freedom March was over, not only Belarusan citizens were detained but Russian ones as well. The Deputy of Russian Duma, Volga Byaklemishchava (faction «Yabloko») was detained during the march and had to spend 2 hours in the charge office. Anastasia Nekazakava, young journalist, came back from the Freedom March only at 5 o'clock in the morning on October 18. Anastasia Nekazakava had studied in Moscow at the University of Geodesy and Cartography, at the faculty of Geography-Cartography. He worked as a teacher at school, was involved in ecological activities, participated in the youth movement «Rainbow defenders»). Now she lives in Minsk, works for newspaper «Navinki». That's the story she told.

All what I saw in Belarus on October 17 is fundamentally different from Russia. When we were detained during ecological marches, the militia was afraid of clashes. If there was any violence, it was almost unspotted. The special troops were afraid that in case they bad behaved improperly while detaining, there would have been a repercussion. They know their obligations and limits. Here I had a feeling that there wasn't any limit...

I joined the march in Bangalor Street when it was practically over. I had been to marches in Belarus in spring and summer. I observed the public activity declining. But on October 17 I was surprised at the quantity. There was a lot of youth and that was pleasant to me, because the most active part of population in Russia is the old people. I don't know why but youth in Russia is far from politics. But here I saw young people who can't stay indifferent to the fate of their own country...

We reached the Skaryny Avenue. We didn't realise at once why all the people decided not to go to the Victory Square. I together with my friend decided not to take Kazlow Street but to go along Zakharaw Street in order to meet the beginning of the column. As I had been told in the militia they had spotted us in Victory Square staying and watching, we had been not in the first row but ahead of it. We were walking peacefully along Zakharaw Street when people in civil rushed towards us and dragged into «Zhiguli» (car). I thought: «It must be a kidnapping! These people must have been mistaken. What will they get from us?» I believe people who were standing at bus stop had an interesting view. We were driving in the car and we asked to show documents. They replied: «Our documents are OK...» It downed on us that we were detained for participation in the march and we were being taken to the police station.

When we arrived at the Savetsky Department of Internal Affairs, there was a youth that had been detained for distributing invitation for the Freedom March. It was at 15.40. We started to write explanatory notes and the militiamen were all young (I don't know whether they had practice or it was their first working year) who were asking one another how to write explanatory notes. One of them doubted whether it was necessary to mention that the militiamen hadn't introduced themselves. We told him: «Write about it, it is necessary under the law. It should be written.»

An hour and a half-later there appeared new people who told about clashes on the bridge over Svislach river: «It's a pity that we had been detained so early and we didn't see it.» They started to write reports against us only at 23 o'clock. Everybody was tired. Somebody was worried that he would be expelled from the University. The last people were brought at 10 o'clock – a guy and a girl participated in the march, then went to their friend's to have tea, the friend went to see them off and all of them were detained at the metro station «Uskhod» (East). Half an hour later that minor girl's mother came. The mother had been explaining till two o'clock in the morning that their daughter had been home all day long: «The girl went to see off the friends and disappeared. Then there was a call from militia that she was detained for participation in the march. How could it be?»

Protocols had been made; I was taken to the head of the department. His name was Gussinsky if I'm not mistaken. He sat in the chair and he was seemed to be drunken. He was in civil. All the detained were taken to his study one by one. This man produced a horrible impression on me. He used bad language everywhere. I came in and sat down. Immediately I was told that I had to standing in front of the head. My press-card was so-called «humiliated»: first they tried to divide it into two parts, then to burn it. The head told to his deputy: «Tear it, I have a bad eyesight!» The deputy simple cut the press-card from one corner to another. It was useless to talk to him. First he told me how dearly he loved Russia and respected Russians, and then he started to cry, «you come here to interfere with our life». Later he shouted: «Do you know what is used to rape men in prison?» He explained rather vivid how and with what. He was half-drunken and couldn't recollect at once and said: «And also with fruit, they are blue. I don't remember the name.» Somebody helped him: «It's an egg-plant.

I couldn't understand how to behave: whether to be glad that I'm not a man or whether women are treated even worse. It was maybe an aching problem for him as he kept on saying: «Look at yourself, your posture is similar to masturbater's one». Suddenly he started to tell me about masturbaters. He had an ill imagination. Then he approached me and butted me saying: «I'm sorry but you know why I'm doing it! It will help to reform you!» I was offended. A young militiaman stood nearly laughing. I rushed to the door, but he tried to drag me away and to strangle, then he ordered his deputy to close the door.


Anastasia NEKAZAKAVA

He went on talking about horrors of prison life, to be exact about the fate of opposition members behind bars. I was told: «There are whores, they are ill. Imagine a scab. If you are there, you'll catch it... And sometimes you don't even know what you suffer from.»

Then Gussinsky, deputy head of Savetsky Department, pointed to a huge portrait of Lukashenka in his study and said: «Do you know him? This is our father – President! Do you know where you are? You are in a police state. We have a President, but nobody loves him and we have to defend him from the public. We have to undertake this mission!» It's a classical saying. After that I was sent to the detention centre in Akrestsina Street.

I had been driven in the bus for a long time but at 5 o'clock in the morning I was told: «Let's forget about it. No further offences». It was another man in civil as well. I said that I couldn't promise anything. But it should be mentioned that no one had ever introduced himself, neither when I was detained nor while drawing up reports. The only thing that near the head's study there is an honour board and there are faces with surnames. I was released at 5 o'clock in the morning.

I would like to add that on October 22 Zmitser Yurkevich who was detained together with Anastassia Nekazakava was brought to trial. He was released as they failed to prove his participation in the Freedom March even with the help of videotapes.

Palina STSEPANENKA

Events Facts Comments

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On 17 October, a he-goat became the first victim who suffered from militiamen during Freedom March in Minsk. Young guys tried to take him to a meeting but failed. He-goat was the first who was detained on 17 October in Minsk. Next day militiamen knifed helpless animal.

On 20 October, Vera Tserlyukevich, resident of Minsk City, summoned both National TV and Broadcasting Company and A.Zimowski particularly. The matter is that she participated in the Freedom March on 17 October and took A.Zimowski's words about participants of the Freedom March as personal insult. A.Zimowski in his TV program commenting on the events that took place in Belarus' capital termed Freedom March participants «buttheads». Vera Tserlyukevich estimated moral damage brought to her by A.Zimowski's comments in 3 milliard roubles (slightly more than $ 4.000).

On 20 October, seventeen year old Zmitser Sharamet, eleventh-form pupil of the secondary school № 13, Orsha, and of the same age Zmitser Grablewski who is eleventh-form pupil too, but of the secondary school № 12, Orsha, were detained in Orsha (Vitsebsk region). They are charged with «two-year-old» case. The point is that two years ago boys pulled down red-green flag introduced first by Stalin and then by Lukashenka but with little changes on it and raised red-white-red flag on that place. These colours are considered to be Belarusan national ones. Pupils were released on 22 October. But they instituted criminal proceedings against Z.Grablewski for breaking article 201 (p.2) of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus.

On 22 October, an issue of a newspaper «Naviny» came out after long break time. This issue was entirely devoted to the events, which took place on 17 October in Minsk. This issue with circulation over 100.000 was spread free of charge.

On 24 October, there was held a picket against Belarus' annexation by Russia, against deteriorating living conditions and poverty, against independent newspapers' closure. Signatories were collected demanding independent inquiry on Yu.Zakharanka, V.Ganchar, A.Krasowski and T.Vinnikava' disappearances to be conducted.

On 27 October, on invitation of Russian deputies of a lower chamber A.Lukashenka spoke out at Russian Duma. In his speech, which lasted nearly two hours, A.Lukashenka was as always «candid». A.Lukashenka reprimanded not only Belarusan opposition but also Russian TV channels (they were paid for coverage of the events on 17 October), International Monetary Fund (petty thieves), president of the Ukraine

...They behaved like fascists...

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When we left the bus, they convoyed us to the wall of a building (it turned out later that it was the detention centre in Akrestsina Street). We stood against the wall (feet and arms apart) and they continued «execution». A guy in a long leather coat was especially severely beaten up. After some time the officer ordered to stop it, as he didn't react the beatings.

This nightmare night will always be in my memory. Only fascists in concentration camps could humiliate people in such a way.

Pavel Alyakseevich Kaparykha testifies (Minsk): During the Freedom March I was detained by people in civil who hadn't shown any identification. I among 5 another detained was taken to the Savetsky Department of Internal Affairs. After a 4-hours detention our group was transferred to the detention centre in Akrestsina Street. Before getting into a bus, we were so-called «examined» by riot police. In the bus we were made lie on the floor and on our way we were humiliated: we were beaten up, walked on. Any attempt to rise a head has punished by a kick.

Andrei Alyakseevich Kaparykha testifies (Minsk). «During my detention for participation in the Freedom March, I was heavily beaten up by people in civil and then I was taken to the Kastrychnitsky Department of Internal Affairs. The militiamen had not shown their identification, humiliated, beat with truncheons in the back and legs. While getting into a bus I hold my arms behind the back and an officer hit me in kidney in solar plexus here were 10 people in the bus (7 boys, 2 girls and an old woman). We were lying on the floor one on the ano-ther between the seats. Any attempt to move was suppressed by threats. Later one of riot police started talking with us one by one. He was interested who we were, what we were, what our salary was. During our talk he used to kick and hit us. I was hit 4 times in kidneys and later in head.

Igar Alyaksandravich Sachanka testifies: «When Freedom March was over, I together with my friends was detained in Pulikhava Street by people in civil who hadn't shown their identification. During the apprehension we didn't resist, but I was seized by neck, made fall on the ground and pressed by a knee. They gripped my neck so tight that I couldn't answer their question about the identification. Then they took off the belt and tied my arms behind the back with my own belt. I was taken to the Savetsky Department of Internal Affairs where we had been from 17.30 to 00.30. After that all the detained were transferred to the custody centre in Akrestsina Street. Before getting into bus we had to pass through a line of riot police. In the bus we were made fall on the ground and on the way the riot police was constantly outraging they were beating, walking on our backs, humiliating us.

Any attempt to rise a head was punished by several blows. During the action on October 17 in Minsk journalists and leaders of public organisations suffered from the law enforcement agencies as well. A militia officer threw a stone into *Valyantsina Figulewskaya* (leader of woman's centre in Lida). It resulted in facial laceration *Mikola Sa-*

Amnesty International stated that all people arrested during and after Freedom March in Minsk would be recognised prisoners of conscience what would allow them to seek refuge in the West.

(surreptitiously met with S.Sharetski) and others as well. He taught Russian parliamentarians what to do in order to live like we do in Belarus.

On 27 October, justice administration of the Minsk City Executive Council began planning check-up of the «Association for Legal Assistance to the Population.» Association's chairman A.Volchyk says that this examination is connected with human rights activities run by the organisation and legal assistance to people suffered during Freedom March on 17 October particularly.

On 31 October, there was held a remembrance meeting in memory of repression victims during Stalin rule in Kurapaty outside Minsk. About 1000 of Minsk residents took part in it including delegates of the second session of the BPF congress, which was held that day in Minsk. Minsk City Executive Committee again banned rally conduction in the centre of Minsk. While meeting participants were gathering on Yakub Kolas Square the militia arrested five people.

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lavey, newspaper «Navinki» official was detained and beaten up after the march near metro station «Partyzanskaya».

Once the prosecutor's office instituted criminal proceedings against the march on October 17, the investigation bodies started to look for March participants with the help of photos.

Yawgen Afnagel is one of the condemned for 15 days for participation in the Freedom March and behind bars he felt a blinding heartache. He managed to hand over a message at liberty saying that wardens refused to send for a doctor and gave him a medicine instead, but the pain was not taken away, on the opposite it increased. The conditions at the detention centre in Akrestsina Street have become more rigid. The wards refuse to hand over foodstuff to the March participants. They introduced a limit – one parcel for 10 days. Earlier, before October 17 one parcel for 5 days had been allowed...

DETAINED AND CONVICTED PEOPLE

Trials over detained people took place in the following days after Freedom March. 65 people were convicted. 20 of them were sentenced to different terms of administrative detention

18 October 1999.

Minsk Savetski district court (judges Sheika, Lazovick, Milgui, Kazadaew)

1. **Alyaksakhin Uladzimir** – warning.
2. **Sidarevich Anatol** – trial put off till 2 November.
3. **Graznova Lyudmila** (declarant of the action) – 300 million rouble fine ($ 500 US).
4. **Bildzyuk Alyaksei** – warning.
5. **Savitski Paval** – 30 million rouble fine ($ 50 US).
6. **Charnyawski Syargei** – 30 million rouble fine.
7. **Kaparykha Paval** – 30 million rouble fine.
8. **Shalistovich Alyaksei** – warning.
9. **Glushko Alyaksei** – 29 million rouble fine.
10. **Guzkow Kiryla** – 5 day term of detention.
11. **Yurkevich Zmitser** – trial putt off till 22 October.
12. **Lugin Yawgen** – 10-day term of detention.
13. **Nazaraw Alyaksei** – 5 day term of detention.
14. **Makovik Natallya** – trial put off till 21 October.
15. **Kaspyarovich Aleg** – 29 million rouble fine.
16. **Kirylionak Paval** – 10 day term of detention.
17. **Zhuk Vyachaslaw** – 5 day term of detention.
18. **Mukhlya Yuras** – 29 million rouble fine.
19. **Yafremenka Alexander** – 3 day term of detention.
20. **Kanapelka Syargei** – 29 million rouble fine.
21. **Gyuntar Barys** – 15 day term of detention.
22. **Ivanova Zoya** – 5 day term of detention.
23. **Turkow** – 5 day term of detention.
24. **Yarashewski Bagdan** – 7 day term of detention.
25. **Grynkevich Zmitser** – 29 million rouble fine.
26. **Kaparykha Andrei** – 29 million rouble fine.
27. **Sankovich Dzyanis** – warning.
28. **Vinyawski Maksim** – warning.
29. **Kastsyuk Paval** – trial put off till 18 October.
30. **Canchar Mikalai** – 29 million rouble fine.
31. **Gerasimovich Nadzeya** – warning.
32. **Sidarenka Paval** – warning.
33. **Sachanka Igar** – 40 million rouble fine.
34. **Kavaliow Stanislaw** – 35 million rouble fine.

Minsk Partyzanski district court (judges Trubnikaw, Dzyalinskaya)

1. **Bar'yalai Volga** – warning.
2. **Kashchanka Uladzimir** – warning.
3. **Nikitsin Alexander** – warning.
4. **Kramko Georgy** – trial put off till 20 October.
5. **Lazowski Miraslaw** 5 day term of detention.
6. **Antsipenka Ales** – warning.
7. **Shchurko Alexander** – 5 day term of detention.
8. **Radzimowski Yury** – warning.
9. **Kamarowski Alexander** – 29 million rouble fine.
10. **Pyrkin Paval** – warning.
11. **Gapeenka Vyachaslaw** – trial put off till 21 October.
12. **Babaryka Syargei** – 5 day term of detention.
13. **Charnow Uladzimir** – 3 day term of detention.
14. **Nikitsin Alexander** – warning.
15. **Myatlitski Mikalai** – warning.
16. **Muzychyn Syargei** – warning.
17. **Slyshkin Uladzimir** – 15 day term of detention.
18. **Yakimovich Syargei** – 50 million rouble fine.
19. **Martysh Syargei** – 29 million rouble fine.
20. **Kruchynin Alexander** – warning.
21. **Goramash Paval** – 5 day term of detention.
22. **Abargimovich Maryna** – 29 million rouble fine.
23. **Lawretskaya Valyantsina** – 29 million rouble fine.
24. **Cherkas Aleg** – 7 day term of detention.
25. **Prazhnikaw V.** – 5 day term of detention.
26. **Osaw** – warning.
27. **Zvernik Uladzimir** – warning.

20 October 1999.

Minsk Savetski district court (judges Sheika and Kazadaew)

1. **Anatol Lyabedzka** (declarant of the action) – 10 day term of detention.
2. **Yawgen Afnagel** (declarant of the action) – 15 day term of detention.
3. **Kastsyuk Paval** – 40 million rouble fine.

21 October 1999.

Minsk Savetski district court

1. **Makovik Natallya** – 35 million rouble fine.

22 October

1. **Yurkevich Zmitser** – discharged.



Mikhail Kukabaka

Draft painting from life

— What! — I got angry, — Have you driven crazy about your Marx?

— Don't wonder. Rack your brains. Don't you know that FBI had spread all over the world? Do you believe that they have gone around such an important object as our camp? Not criminal but a political one, — a Marxist stressed.

I was deep in my thoughts. I have to mention that this Marxist was a very intelligent man. He graduated from 2 Universities. Besides he had read the whole Marx from beginning to end. There were rumours that he had been put in prison for exactly that thing. Any extremity is said to be dangerous. I would like to add that there was one more Marxist in our section. He had never read Marx because he was a good turner. But the other Marxist had never played truant from political classes otherwise he would be deprived of extra-pay. He had a wife and two children and that's why some extra money was of great help to a family budget. They used to speak about Marx and Lenin at political classes. From everything that had been taught, the other Marxist learnt three ideas: working class is hegemonic power, the highest justice is proletariat's dictatorship and the last is that proletariats all over the world should unite. Once the officials were unjust and he had decided to put in practice all the things he had got to know at the political classes. He had stopped his lathe and asked others to follow him: «It's high time to stop cheating us, talking about justice but in practice...» But his reliance on proletariat's dictatorship failed. Obviously, Marx had not worked out the theory properly because the other Marx had been transferred to working in Perm Region for 6 years.

Here he hadn't read Marx but nevertheless he used to call all people «Me. Democrats», who are a burden to a working class. The other Marxist was good at playing chess and once suggested me to play with him. I had never been good at chess; the only thing I knew was what each chessman meant. Having put them at random on the board, I told to my «partner»: «Look! These pawns are people or people are pawns, it's all the same. You are to appoint other chessmen yourself. Built a state of proletariat's dictatorship on the board. Let everything be just...

The other Marxist thought for half a second looking at the board and then he pushed all chessmen away with irritation. He said that I was Mr. Democrat like others and consequently I wanted to be a burden to a working class. We had never played chess ever since.

But let's come back to the story.

— Listen, do you know anything about logic? – The Marxist asked me.

— Of course, I do. In prison I came across the book of it and I had studied it for a month and half. It's a very sensible book, though sometimes not clear. – I praised a logic handbook.

— I've studied it in two universities, the Marxist said and suggested — Let's discuss logically.

— OK, I agree.

— What do you think who benefits from breaking Soviet laws: FBI or Communists? – the Marxist started from afar and I could hardly understand what he was hinting at.



— It's beneficial to those who break it, — I answer, — Communists break it and they are likely to benefit from it.

— How easily you make conclusion! Why should Communists break laws, adopted by themselves? Would they do it to the detriment to themselves?

— But they do, — I insist, — there is no keeping them in check. That's more here, in the camp. You said yourself that it's a political camp and a special attention is paid to it. But KGB officers break laws more often than others.

— I repeat: an honest communist will not break a law, adopted by him. It's not logical. It would mean discrediting of their own power. It's FBI agents who break Soviet laws, do you understand me? Do you realise who is working here? – the Marxist decided to disclose himself on seeing that I was negligent of it.

— I can hardly believe it, — I expressed my hesitation. – They select the most experienced people to work here.

— You, dim person! – the Marxist said with a slight sympathy. – You say, experienced. Let's recollect Beriya, head of KGB, Stalin's first assistant was an experienced and checked one, wasn't he? But he turned out to be an English spy, didn't he?

— Yes, it's true, — I remember. – It was reported in press...

— And Pyankowsky, — the Marxist went on – was also an experienced one, wasn't he? These are people from the high rank, not to say anything about the others. Roughly speaking, 2/3 of all KGB staff has a part time job in FBI.

— You are kidding.

— Not in the least. I have been observing it for a long time and came to a conclusion that more than half of the whole staff is recruited to work for FBI. Major Dalmatov himself, head of our camp, is likely to be FBI major. I'm sure he combines two jobs. The mechanism of «undermining work» is simple. Local agents are ordered to carry out different provocations, to break Soviet laws from there. You, nonconformists, report about it to the West. And there speak about the outbreak of violation of human rights in our country. In fact you, nonconformists and KGB do the same dirty things: you co-operate in undermining Soviet regime. You discredit it in the eyes of our people. The only difference is that KGB does it for money and you – do it sincerely because of your political naivety.

— Quite a trick. Are there so many spies in our country, among the most reliable and checked people in particular, — to be honest I was in two minds whether to believe or not.

— Well, lack of intelligence is a drawback but it could be overcome. Do you know that... — the Marxist turned around in fear and whispered in my ear — ... Lenin himself was recruited by German intelligence?

— It's incredible! – I got angry. – He is a leader of proletariat all over the world. It's a lie!

— I see you are not mature to be sent to prison. You hadn't learnt logic properly. You could have taken it with you. Will you explain to me now it happened that he crossed the whole Germany under guard in the sealed carriage and came into another country with which Germany was at war?

— Is it true? – I was surprised that I opened the mouth.

— That's it, — the Marxist finished, turned and went on away his own business.

(To be continued)

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